

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 14546 151541Z

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 CPR-01 /060 W
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5493
INFO USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 14546

E. O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PDIP, CH, US
SUBJECT: COMMEMORATIVE ACTIVITIES IN LONDON ON
DEATH OF MAO TSE-TUNG

REF: STATE 223L28

1. TO DATE, COMMEMORATIVE ACTIVITIES IN LONDON ON
DEATH OF CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN
LIMITED TO OPENING OF CONDOLENCE BOOK AT PRC EMBASSY.
WE DID NOT RPT NOT RECEIVE COPY OF CIRCULAR DIPLOMATIC
NOTE ANNOUNCING OPENING OF BOOK.

2. ACCORDINGLY, EMBOFF RESPONSIBLE FOR COVERAGE OF
CHINESE AFFAIRS (KAHANE) CALLED ACQUAINTANCE AT
PRC EMBASSY TO INQUIRE IF HE MIGHT SIGN BOOK. CHINESE
EMBOFF RETURNED CALL TO RESPOND, "YOU WOULD BE WELCOME,"
AND KAHANE WENT TO PRC EMBASSY AND SIGNED BOOK ON
SEPTEMBER L4. CHINESE EMBOFF MET KAHANE AND THANKED
HIM FOR COMING.

3. PRC EMBASSY IS LITERALLY CRAMMED WITH HUNDREDS OF
WHITE AND YELLOW FLORAL WREATHS, MOST OF WHICH ARE
ADORNED WITH RIBBONS BEARING MESSAGES IN CHINESE.
DIPLOMATIC AND OFFICIAL VISITORS ARE ESCORTED TO THE
HEAD OF THE LONG QUEUE OF LOCAL CHINESE PATIENTLY
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PAGE 02 LONDON 14546 151541Z

AWAITING THEIR TURN TO SIGN THE CONDOLENCE BOOK.

4. FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND SIGNED BOOK ON BEHALF OF HMG ON SEPTEMBER L3. (FCO HAS TOLD US THAT PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN WOULD HAVE SIGNED PERSONALLY HAD HE BEEN IN COUNTRY.)

5. ALTHOUGH LOCAL PRESS HAS REFERRED TO PLANS FOR "MEMORIAL SERVICES" IN HONOR OF MAO, NEITHER FCO PROTOCOL OFFICE NOR DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES WE HAVE QUERIED ARE AWARE OF ANY SUCH SERVICE.

6. PRESS COVERAGE OF MAO'S DEATH HAS BEEN HEAVY, WITH LENGTHY BIOGRAPHIES FOLLOWED BY SPECULATION ON THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION. ON TELEVISION, BBC-2 AIRED "THE RISE OF MAO TSE-TUNG," A SPECIAL THREE-HOUR DOCUMENTARY BY FRENCH REPORTER ROGER PIC, WHICH BBC HAD PREVIOUSLY PURCHASED FROM FRENCH TV. WHILE UNDOUBTEDLY TIMELY, PIC'S PRESENTATION WAS AN UNABASHED PANEGYRIC TO THE GLORIES WROUGHT BY THE CHINESE CP WITH NO MENTION MADE OF ANY FAULTS; WHEN THE PROGRAM ENDED AT 12:15 A.M. (AND PRESUMABLY ALL BUT THE MOST MASOCHISTIC OF SINOLOGISTS HAD BEEN DRIVEN TO BED), THE BBC-2 ANNOUNCER CASUALLY MENTIONED, "THE VIEWS PRESENTED WERE THOSE OF THE REPORTER."

ARMSTRONG

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